



GALTtraffic

The Weather Outside Was Frightful...

An Unplanned Visit to NOAA

Jerry Thomas, Editor, EAA Chapter 932

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Traveling during cold and snowy months is always unpredictable. But, we watch the weather and do our best to plan accordingly.

My wife and I were driving to Denver to spend the Thanksgiving holiday with family. Normally, we would drive I80 across Nebraska and eventually head southwest to Denver on I76. But a large winter storm was swirling into the Rockies from California, with indications that it would be moving across the country on a northeasterly track, making road travel through Nebraska more than a bit dicey. The storm made a more southern route across Kansas a better choice.

As we drove west, the storm's eastward movement began causing road closures along I70, first in eastern Colorado, then into western Kansas.

We were about to run into a very windy snowstorm head-on.

By early afternoon, it was apparent that we could get no further. I called ahead and was able to find a room near Goodland, KS. (You might recall Goodland as the home of the first patented helicopter in the U.S. which appeared in the *Galt Traffic November 2018* issue.)

The morning of Thanksgiving eve greeted us with a dazzling white landscape, a brilliant blue sky...and trucks crawling west along I70 on 3 inches of ice. Deciding that we really didn't need to add to the traffic problems, I decided to give the sun some time to do its thing to alleviate the mess. Then, I spotted a street sign reading **NOAA Building** directing me up one of Goodland's streets. I

There are 122 NWS Offices across the U.S.



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didn't know what to expect, but we had time, I was curious, and I needed a feature story for the newsletter.

The NOAA facility is actually an office of the NWS (National Weather Service - see Sorting Out The Acronyms on page *), is adjacent to the city-owned, non-towered Renner Field (Goodland Municipal Airport - KGLD). In the vestibule, a sign indicated that I needed to press a button to enter, but a friendly staff member happened to spot us through the glass wall and allowed us access to the front office.

I described our travel situation and asked if there was any kind of a brief tour that Marie and I might get of the facility. I also indicated I was a pilot, a pronouncement that causes an automatic eye roll from my wife.

We were introduced to a meteorologist by the name of Joseph, who agreeably escorted us into a main work room furnished with nine identical workstations, each having five computer monitors and a pair of keyboards and mice. At the time, four people appeared to be on duty though there were also several offices on the perimeter that may have been occupied.

Before we interrupted, Joseph had been updating a TAF. While the FAA sets the definitions for TAFs, METARs, SIGMETs, AIRMETs and other products, the National Weather Service (NWS) provides the actual data we see on the Aviation Weather Center (AWC) site at aviationweather.gov. The information you hear when you access an ASOS (Automated Surface Observing Station) is provided by through a local NWS office.

The Goodland facility (GLD) covers northwest Kansas, a portion of southwest Nebraska, and middle-eastern Colorado. That area sees weather that comes from the front range of the Rockies and sweeps across the high plains of Colorado. That weather can be very different than the weather across the rest of Kansas. Goodland is the county seat of Sherman County, which sees more tornadoes than any other area in the country!

The Goodland office stays in constant touch with neighboring offices in Boulder, Pueblo, Hastings, North Platte, Cheyenne and others via a dedicated computer chat room utility, phone, 2-way radio and other methods, to collaborate and coordinate their forecasts.

Temperature, dew points, winds, wind gusts, cloud cover, predominant weather types (snow, freezing rain, fog, etc.), moisture amounts, dust caused by drought, smoke from wildfires,



Joseph Patton, NWS Meteorologist

the percentage of precipitation are just some of the important items that the staff may be monitoring at any time. When you hear someone say "there's a 30 percent chance that we're going to get significant snow," that number likely originates with the meteorologists at a NWS facility nearby.

I asked Joseph just how much human conjecture is involved when predicting the weather. He explained that research has shown that the most value that they can add as human forecasters is in the first couple of days. That's when they might look at a model and say, "No, that's not what I think is going to happen. Let's raise the temperatures," or maybe "I think we should increase the winds." That's the point where I like to think science meets art. The reality is that the *art* is an education enhanced by experience.

Forecasts are most accurate in the first 36 hours. At the local scale, meteorologists generally don't forecast beyond 7 days. Studies confirm that computer models typically have a better track record when developing extended forecasts. Meteorologists will typically blend several models and add value by tweaking the numbers based on their experience and daily verifications. (See the boxed explanation below.)

Joseph then lead us outside to see their radome, the giant "soccer ball on a tower," thing we saw as we drove toward the NWS office. The rotating dish and its protective dome is on a platform 60 feet off the ground. It operates 24/7/365, sending out a steady radar

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So, a weather model walks into a bar...

Not really, but since you're here...

The atmosphere is a **chaotic** system. It is simply not possible to accurately predict weather processes that even meteorologists don't always understand. Enter the **Weather Model**. In the simplest sense, a model is a computer program that uses raw data to simulate what the future weather conditions might be. However, because of the nature of the atmosphere, no one model consistently produces the *best* forecasts, so a large number of models have been developed around the globe.

Each model has advantages and disadvantages. The US maintains the **GFS (Global Forecast System)** model which runs on supercomputers somewhere in Maryland. Other models, like the **NAM (North American Mesoscale Model)**, the **RAP (Rapid Refresh Model)**, the **ECMWF (European Model)**, the **Japanese Model** and numerous others have been developed.

Forecasters seldom utilize only one model. Instead, they compare the output from several models that are fed the same raw data.

Doing that helps reduce uncertainty in predictions.

Another method of reducing uncertainty is by doing what's called **ensemble forecasting**, in which multiple simulations are run using one model, with each simulation having a very slight variation in the data. Maybe the temperature is lowered by a degree or the winds are increased 2 knots. By generating a range of possible outcomes, it's possible to show different scenarios for several days forward. Multiple simulations can serve as an indicator of how long into the future the forecast may be useful. The smaller the difference between outcomes, the more accurate and reliable the forecast is likely to be.

Models can be created to serve specific needs: some produce long-term forecasts, others may have faster updates; some are capable of producing greater detail over a shorter time period, while others can produce greater resolution for more localized events like thunderstorms, tornadoes, etc.

Weather models are developed by national interests and commercial organizations. The commercial models are often used to provide forecasts for specific industries, like agriculture, trucking, insurance, etc.

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beam. When that beam bounces off clouds or precipitation, a portion of the signal reflects back to the receiving dish as data, which is fed directly into the office, where the quality of the data is verified, and sent out into the world. When I asked how long it



took to make a full "sweep", Joseph indicated that there wasn't a simple answer to my question. The dish makes scans horizontally and also in several elevations, receiving its data from a virtual cone-shaped segment of the atmosphere specified by the meteorologists. That area can be dependent on a particular weather feature that they are interested in. On a clear day, like the one we enjoyed during our visit, the dish can do a full-

volume scan, that is a full coverage of the sky horizon to overhead, doing one full rotation, then tilting up a number of degrees and doing another rotation, etc., in approximately 10 minutes. However, on a severe-weather day, they can program the dish to operate faster so information can be gathered more quickly.

When a big weather event is anticipated, such as a tornado outbreak, the office will call in more staff and split duties into sectors. Several people may be working radar operations. One

person may be watching east Colorado, another assigned to watch the area north of I70 while another watches south of I70. Someone else may be looking for possible flash flooding development. The office can spool up *very* fast.

Each workstation can handle the full functions of any other. When the Dodge City office once went down due to a communication problem, Goodland NWS took on all of the Dodge City functions, assigning an entire team to concentrate on delivering Dodge City area forecasts.

I am grateful to the welcoming and knowledgeable staff of the Goodland NOAA/NWS facility, with special thanks to Meteorologist Joseph Patton, who generously showed Marie and me around the office and radar tower and provided an excellent overview of what the NWS does. Thanks also to the several other meteorologists there who answered my questions and helped deepen my understanding of the scope of their work.

The mission of the National Weather Service is "*to provide weather, water, and climate data, forecasts and warnings for the protection of life and property and the enhancement of the national economy.*"

These scientists combine technology, research, experience and skill to accomplish that mission to the best of their abilities. I think they do it very well.

And yes, we finally arrived in Denver late in the afternoon, having taken 3 days to make a 2-day road trip. We enjoyed a delightful Thanksgiving Day with our daughter, her husband and two little Disney princess wannabes. 

Sorting out the Acronyms

Pilots depend on various sources for weather information. Given the broad availability of weather information, I never thought much about exactly where it all comes from and what the hierarchy of the weather providers is. So I asked some questions and did some research. Here's what I've found.

Please note: If any of the info present here is wrong, the error is entirely mine. I would appreciate being notified if corrections are needed.

1. NOAA, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, an agency of the **U.S. Department of Commerce**, is headquartered in Silver Springs, MD.

2. The National Weather Service (NWS) (weather.gov and aviationweather.gov) is one of nine services that fall under NOAA's auspices. The others are the **National Ocean Service**, the **National Environmental Satellite, Data and Information Service**, the **National Marine Fisheries Service**, the **Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research**, the **Office of Marine and Aviation Operations** which is the research fleet (think "Hurricane Hunter" stuff) of the

Federal government operated by the **NOAA Commissioned Corps**, the **National Geodetic Survey**, and the **National Integrated Drought Information System**.

There are 122 NWS offices around the country. In addition, large airports such as O'Hare often have a **CWSU (Center Weather Service Unit)** on site to help coordinate weather information for Air Traffic Control.

3. A Flight Service Station (FSS) is an integrated FAA weather provider that bundles weather products derived from NWS data to serve the specific needs of pilots. In addition to a comprehensive forecast, an FSS briefing can include **PIREPs**, **AIRMETs**, **SIGMETs**, **Convective SIGMETs**, **NOTAMs**, and **TFRs** (temporary flight restrictions).

4. DUATS (Direct User Access Terminal Service), once a separate weather information and flight planning service provider contracted by the FAA. The service was discontinued on May 16, 2018.

Replaced by...

5. Leidos This name isn't even an acronym. Believe it or not, it's clipped from the word "kaleidoscope". (Can't accuse them of being creative.) It is a publicly-traded company, an independent FAA provider, spun off from **SAIC (Science Applications International Corporation)** and merged with **Lockheed Martin Information Systems & Global Solutions**. It can be accessed as **Flight Service (FSS)** at 1800wxbrief.com.

However...

6. Tablet apps like ForeFlight, Garmin Pilot, FltPlan Go, WingX, AeroVie, FlyQ, and others including **Flightplan.com**, offer interfaces and value-added features that include preflight weather briefings, flight planning and filing, eliminating the need to access Leidos directly, though some applications do so in the background and require you to be a registered Leidos user.

Note:

It appears - and makes sense - that most of the raw data used by other services would originate at the NWS.



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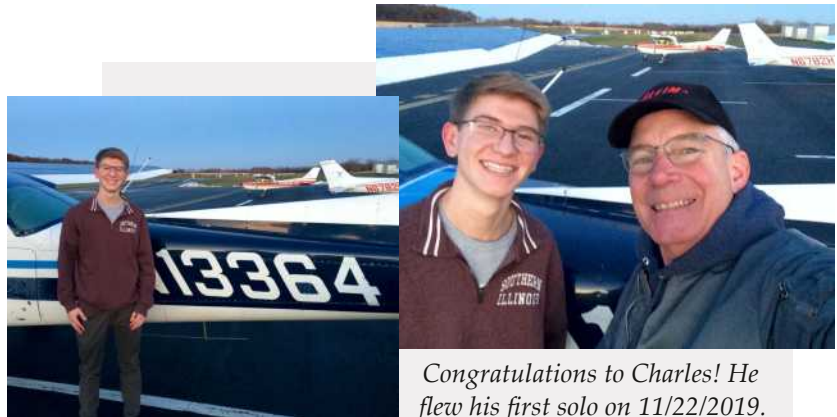
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Airport Business Hours
8AM to 5PM
Monday thru Sunday

JB Aviation Flight School News



Congratulations to Charles! He flew his first solo on 11/22/2019. He's pictured with his instructor Marty Seitz.

Please
join us

GALT AIRPORT Christmas PARTY

DECEMBER 14TH ❄ 6 O'CLOCK PM

Entertainment from
Mentalist/ Hypnotist, Zack Percell

Be astonished as he reads thoughts,
predicts the serial number from a
dollar bill and more

Appetizers
&
Drinks

Please RSVP to Rebekah@flywithJB.com by Dec. 9th
Galt Airport Studio 5112 Greenwood Rd, Greenwood, IL

A Change of View

Galt Gains a CFI

by Beth Rehm, EAA Chapter 932

After working at a desk for over 30 years I decided it was time for a major career change. I was burnt out from endless conference calls, spreadsheets and emails and doing a job I couldn't even clearly describe to friends and family. It was time to do something different and a perfect opportunity to do something I am passionate about. So I came up with a plan to get a job in aviation.

I've been an aviation enthusiast since I was a child and a private pilot since 1996 and I am fortunate enough to own a Mooney with my husband Eric. In order to make flying a career I needed to get my instrument, commercial, certified flight instructor (CFI) and multi-engine ratings.

I had tried to work on my instrument rating a few times in the past but weather and work schedules had made it very difficult to make much progress. I decided to take accelerated flight training courses at Livingston Aviation in Waterloo, IA and scheduled to start those at the beginning of August. There were

pros and cons with this path. On the one hand the training was full-time and I would have no other distractions. But on the other hand, it was pretty intense and being away from home had its own challenges.

To prepare for the accelerated courses I needed to study for and pass all the written tests beforehand. I bought a bunch of books and at the beginning of April I got to work studying pretty much 6 to 8 hours every day. I also used the Sheppard Air Test Prep Software (www.sheppardair.com) to get ready for the tests and by the middle of June, I had passed all the required FAA knowledge tests.

For the next six weeks prior to my scheduled start date at Livingston Aviation, I did as much instrument training at Galt as I could with my husband in our airplane. I am very aware of how lucky I am to be married to an airline pilot/CFI-I and that entitles me free flight training! I probably had about 20-hours simulated instrument time by the time I went to Waterloo and it was enormously

helpful to have that experience already.

My schedule at Livingston was 5 days a week, two flights a day (weather permitting) with ground school and a lunch break in between flights and some studying by myself in the evenings. There was more ground school and less flying for the commercial and CFI courses. My main flight instructor was Chad Lee with support from CFI's Erik Mondt and Dave Hummel. All of them were terrific to work with and shared so much knowledge and experience with me. The line staff took great care of my airplane and kept it in a hanger the whole time I was there. I was flying so much the Mooney needed an oil change as well a replacement left main tire. The maintenance department at Livingston Aviation took care of those items so quickly I didn't even miss a day of flying.

KALO itself was a great airport for training, particularly instrument training. It is a class D airport with three runways (06 - 24, 12 - 30 and 18 - 36), four VOR

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Beth Rehm



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approaches, six GPS approaches and an ILS with a localizer back course. Tower and approach/departure controllers were extremely helpful and accommodating for training and check-rides. I did most of my training right there but I also flew approaches at nearby airports such as Independence (KIIB) and Olwein (KOLZ) as well as cross country flights to Spencer (KSPW), Fort Dodge (KFOD) and Mason City (KMCW).

I've been back and forth between home and Waterloo since August and despite some unscheduled delays due to illness and weather, I was able to complete my instrument check-ride on September 10th, my commercial certificate on October 17th and my CFI rating on November 14th. I am planning to get my multi-engine rating in the spring.

Seven months after I began studying and training I have my first job in aviation: *flight instructing for JB Aviation at Galt Airport*. Its been twenty three years since I started flying as a hobby and it is a great feeling to turn that hobby into a new profession! 



In the Nick of Time

For those of you who might not have noticed, the sagging ceiling in the Studio had a serious case of wood rot and a robust population of carpenter ants munching away at the beams.

Fortunately, Parker Johnston, Carpenter Extrordinaire of EAA932, was able to attack the problem and manage to pull off a miracle by getting everything repaired in time for Andy Miller's presentation on November 9th.

*Thanks for all the hard work,
Parker!*



When pigs fly...

Planes on Posts

Since we're heading into the holidays, the editor thought it would be nice to have a little something more festive. Unfortunately, the best he

could come up with was this poor porker and his somewhat out-of-trim biplane, a Mardi-Gras leftover spotted resting in in a New Orleans warehouse. Maybe the pig pilot did some over enthusiastic taxiing along Bourbon Street. The plane is on a stand, not a post but but we're inclined to give it a pass in the spirit of the holiday season. Party hardy, piggy!



Spot Santa in a Plane on a Post? Take a quick pic and send it to: editor@eaa932.org

Gathering Recap

Weather Accidents: a presentation by AOPA's Andy Miller

On November 9, our friend from AOPA, Andy Miller, reminded us of his appearance at last year's gathering, when he drove in from Appleton, only to be greeted at Galt with 18 inches of snow and a handful of attendees!

Fortunately, this year was much more conducive to travel, and everyone felt a whole lot better about showing up at a friendly country airport early on a Saturday morning.



Even better, Andy was able to fly his AOPA-provided "re-imagined" C152 to Galt without a hitch.

Before he began his presentation on "Weather

Related Accidents", Andy reminded us of what we are privileged to have right here: an active aviation community at a supportive airport facility and involved and committed chapter membership. We should appreciate that there are many other chapters that struggle to survive.

Andy noted that he was a Member of EAA long before he was member of AOPA. EAA's CEO, Jack Pelton has said in his case, he was an AOPA member first and EAA member later. The point to be made is that there are no longer tuff battles between the organizations. There is a recognition that the field of aviation is too small, and what we're all doing is far too important to be wasting time and resources. The leadership of both groups has directed their staffs to work together for general aviation's common good.

Andy began his interactive presentation with a question: "Does weather cause accidents?" While the attendees agreed that it is certainly a factor, it's really the decisions that a pilot makes that usually creates the problem leading to the accident.

As pilots, we have far better weather tools than we've ever had before. Instead of pin-fed paper printouts with only code and no pictures, we have amazing tools on our computers at home and at our fingertips when we fly. Our tablet apps tell us where the cloud tops are, where turbulence might be expected and when ice is likely. Still, the most dangerous thing we do is to fly VFR into IMC (Instrument Meteorological Conditions).

Why?

Attitudes may be the

biggest factor. Andy recommended giving ourselves the ACID test, checking for: **Arrogance, Complacency, Ignorance and Distraction.**



He noted that any of those elements can get us into IMC trouble very quickly, and once we're there, things turn deadly. Studies by the UofI Aviation Institute have repeatedly found that an untrained pilot lasts 178 seconds – less than three minutes – before suffering a loss of control (LOC).

Andy also reminded us that LOC can begin before takeoff and after landing. Records show that one-third of all crosswind accidents happen while taxiing!

As pilots, we have an unlimited authority to declare an emergency. What we do not have is the authority, ethical or moral, to place other people's lives in danger – on the ground or in our aircraft.

Everyone knows not to drink and fly. We're aware of the effects of medications that can affect our decision-making skills and response times. But Andy said that people seldom think about not getting enough sleep before piloting an airplane. He stated that, "If you miss one-half of your normal night's sleep, it has the same effect on your cognitive abilities as two alcoholic drinks."

Something to keep in mind. (Just don't let it keep you up at night!)



As amazing as the tools we have at our disposal are,, we need to be aware of the limitations of technology. It has no ability to protect us from our own *arrogance, complacency, ignorance or distractions.*

We need to fly the airplane first and always make decisions based on what we've been trained to do as pilots.



Off the Top of My Head

Cogitations from the Editor

Fly-by-Wire

Several quotes surfaced last week that struck me as interesting. All involved fly-by-wire control systems.

Great, a theme! Newsletter editors quickly learn to never look a gift horse in the tailpipe.

Note: none of the quotes apply to the kind of aircraft we typically see around Galt Airport. Instead, they pertain to bigger airplanes, you know, ones with *bathrooms*.

The first one struck me while watching a YouTube video by Juan Browne, a long-time airline pilot, describing a serious flight control problem that occurred last month on-board an Embraer 175. During Juan's explanation, he quipped: *"Why do we have fly-by-wire technology? It's the wave of the future, it's the way all these aircraft are going, it's the way, eventually, that were all going to be programed out of a job as pilots in the distant future."*

That reminded me of a quote from the former Chief Test Pilot for Boeing's 777, John Cashman. He stated: *"From a safety standpoint, in our view one of the things that we do in the basic design is the pilot always has the ultimate authority of control. There's no computer on the airplane that he cannot override or turn off if the ultimate comes."*

I'm willing to believe that Mr. Cashman is a better test pilot than spokesperson - and I sincerely hope that the 737 Max is an anomaly.

After the video ended, I read through the comments that followed. One, from a viewer named Tom Gardner2,

jumped out: *"Airliners of the future will be crewed by a pilot and a dog. The dog's job is to bite the pilot if he touches anything, and the pilot's job is to feed the dog."*

Fly-by-Rottweiler?

In tangentially-related news:

Originating in 1979, the supersonic F-16 was the first military jet that used fly-by-wire systems controlled by four



on-board computers. That fact made them idea for modification into non-piloted drones, something that the Air Force has been doing since 2010, the drone version re-designated as the QF-16.

Recently, 32 of the aircraft retired to a boneyard in Arizona, have been called up to active duty. Boeing has "dronefied" them for use at Tyndall Air Force Base in

Florida where they serve as highly maneuverable targets to stress-test new anti-aircraft missile systems.

There is also discussion about using the QF-16 as a host for an artificial intelligence program called Skyborg that can allow unmanned aircraft to serve as *wingmen* for future human-piloted stealth aircraft. But will it help when socializing?

You can read more in Laura Mallonee's article: *"What It Takes To Turn a Vintage F-16 Into a Drone"* in the December issue of *Wired* magazine or at [Wired.com](https://www.wired.com).

You can also watch Juan Browne's video at: https://youtu.be/vV_o9kTRXUY

Galt Traffic is published monthly on www.eaa932.org and also electronically distributed in PDF format to approximately 800 readers. To be added to the distribution list, please contact editor@eaa932.org.

EAA Chapter 932 is a local chapter of the Experimental Aircraft Association (EAA) based at Galt Airport (10C) in Greenwood/Wonder Lake, Illinois. Established in 1989, we are a 501(c)(3) corporation and a registered charity in the State of Illinois (CO#01065208)

EAA (www.eaa.org) is an international organization of members with a wide range of aviation interests, including vintage aircraft, aerobatics, warbirds and amateur builders. EAA Chapter 932 meetings are usually held at Galt Airport on the second Saturday of the month. Check our website for more information about the chapter and events and activities at www.eaa932.org or on Facebook at www.facebook.com/pages/galt-airport-young-eagles/116543021696619

EAA Chapter 932
Chapter Social

Join us for a buffet-style Dinner and Chapter Social!
Enjoy good friends, good food, drinks,
and maybe a bit of hangar flying.

Saturday January 11th

5:30pm to 8:30pm

Rustic Room

at the

Rusty Nail Saloon

Ringwood, IL

<http://www.rustynailringwood.com/>

\$20.00 per person

Family members age 10 and under: \$10.00

*Informal Buffett Dinner
and Cash Bar*

Please RSVP before January 5th

Sign up and pay by PayPal by clicking:

<https://eaa932.org/event/chapter-social-rusty-nail-saloon/>

or contact Arnie by phone at 815-403-1696 or email at

arnie@eaa932.org

You can also leave a check for EAA932 at the Galt FBO

The President's Page

Arnie Quast, President, EAA Chapter 932



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As we wind down the year, we have a lot to be thankful for in what we've accomplished as a chapter in 2019. The events, gatherings, and outreach that have gone on over the year have been fun, filled with camaraderie, and educational. Our membership is comprised of some amazing people who make up one of the best airport communities around. We are truly blessed to have such a great EAA Chapter at Galt Airport!

Our final chapter gathering of the year was another excellent presentation by Andy Miller from the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA). Andy's programs always have a great turnout. Many folks stuck around for a delicious lunch of several of our member's favorite chili dishes. (See our editor's recap of the program on page 7 of this issue of Galt Traffic.)

In January, we take a break from hosting chapter gatherings so everyone can enjoy the holidays. Our schedule will resume in the new year. Keep your eyes on our website for information as it develops.

Speaking of our website, the best way to see what is coming up with the chapter is to check out the EVENTS tab at www.eaa932.org.

The kick-off event will be a Chapter Social at the Rusty Nail Saloon in Ringwood on Saturday January 11th. Last year we had a great crowd show up, and I am hoping to see another fun group of people join us for some good food, drinks, and socializing. I hope to see you there!

Our EAA 932 board has been busy planning events and gatherings for the coming year. As I have mentioned before, we really value our membership's input to help guide us with activity ideas that will draw folks to the airport once a month to a chapter gathering. Suggestions are always welcome and can be sent to myself or any one of our board members through contact links on our website.

There are also several initiatives that we are working on as the new year unfolds. Once again, we are applying to sponsor another Ray Scholarship through the EAA in Oshkosh. Our first round of administering the Ray Scholarship was a complete success! We also hope to engage with the McHenry County Foundation to procure a Mission Grant to further improve our chapter facilities at the airport.

As we close out the year, I wish you and your entire family an enjoyable holiday season and a Happy New Year! I look forward to seeing all of you around the airport and at one of our chapter gatherings!

Best regards,

Arnie



*Deegan, enjoys his own thoughts
during a late afternoon ride in
JB's Piper with his mom,
JB Aircraft
Maintenance Administrator,
Stephanie McClellan*

*May your dreams take flight
in the
New Year*